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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2276
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY PRIORITY 1295
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEHXS/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 001389

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [HUMANR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: FURTHER VIETNAMESE NEW PARTY DISSIDENT
DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A) HANOI 1368; B) HCMC 607; C) HANOI 1338; D) HANOI
1320

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: On June 6, Poloff delivered a verbal message to a representative of the Democracy Party of Vietnam (DPV) representative that we will continue to meet with dissidents, but this should not be misconstrued as active support presaging intervention with the GVN. Police harassment of DPV members continues as party organizers finalize an action plan. Meanwhile, the GVN is considering the DPV's fate entirely outside of the public's view. They caution us in the strongest possible terms not to get involved. We continue to tell the GVN that the United States is interested but not involved in the DPV's actions, and that we support freedom of expression and peaceful political activity, and urge Vietnam to extend and expand the political space for people like the members of the DPV. Our current course, quietly counseling restraint on both sides while remaining out of the fight, maximizes the chances of averting a confrontation and, if that confrontation occurs, preserving our ability to maintain forward momentum in the relationship. End Summary.

Our message to the DPV

¶2. (SBU) On June 6, poloff met with DPV activist Lawyer Dai Nguyen to deliver a verbal message (per Ref A) to the DPV leadership that while the United States might want Vietnamese law to change, until it does, the DPV and other Vietnamese political dissidents are subject to severe penalties for their political actions, and if they are arrested, there will be little that the U.S. Government can do about it. Dai acknowledged that he understood the message and agreed that future meetings with Western diplomats should be more discreet than the May 30 meeting (Ref D) and on a one-on-one basis. He also agreed not to actively publicize future meetings with Western diplomats.

¶3. (SBU) Dai reported that DPV leader Hoang Minh Chinh is currently isolated in his home. The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) has established two barriers preventing anyone from entering or leaving Chinh's house. One checkpoint blocks the alleyway leading to the home; the other barrier blocks the actual door to Chinh's house. Chinh and his family cannot be reached by phone or internet, Dai added.

¶4. (SBU) Dai also stated that police observation of his activities diminished over the weekend although his cell phone and internet services were disconnected on Saturday. Other DPV advocates have had members of their families contacted by MPS officers "for informational purposes," and one lawyer in training at Dai's office, Pham Sy Nguyen, was "terrorized" (NFI) into cooperating with the police investigation of Dai and the DPV on June 5. Nevertheless, Dai reported that the DPV has finished drafting an action plan and will publish it soon on an international website, hopefully by June 30 which is the anniversary of the DPV's founding in 1944.

Our Message to the GVN

¶5. (SBU) We have met several times with MPS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to discuss this issue. Poloff raised it with MFA (Americas Desk) June 5 and the General Department of Security of MPS on June 6. The Ambassador addressed the issue directly with Vice Foreign Minister Le Van Bang at a private lunch on June 7 (septel). The message we have delivered to the GVN is that the United States supports freedom of expression and peaceful political activity, and urges Vietnam to extend and expand the political space for people like the members of the DPV. Furthermore, the members of the DPV are a small group that represents little threat to the regime. The GVN's reaction to the DPV organizers will determine their significance; arresting them will turn them into martyrs and an instant global example of Vietnam's continuing intolerance of free speech and political expression. The United States, the Ambassador told VFM Bang, is interested, but not involved, in the activities of the DPV. He warned Bang that arresting the political dissidents would inflame opposition to Vietnam

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and could slow down the PNTR vote process.

Comment

¶6. (SBU) The DPV's fate is a Vietnamese domestic drama playing out almost entirely outside of the public's view. Both sides are very interested in the United States' role. Chinh and his group want the USG, and the Embassy, to support them strongly and perhaps create an umbrella of protection under which they can operate. For them, publicizing any contact with the USG legitimized their movement and, they believe, protects them against retaliation by the GVN. MPS and MFA, however, caution us in the strongest possible terms not to get involved. The message we have received subtly but clearly is that the DPV's activity is a political crisis that the authorities are trying to manage, and that evidence of foreign (especially American) involvement will force the GVN's hand and force them to crack down on the dissidents. Normally friendly and warm contacts ice over dramatically when this subject comes up, an indication of its seriousness to the GVN. Our current course, quietly counseling restraint on both sides while remaining out of the fight, maximizes the chances of averting a confrontation and, if that confrontation occurs, preserving our ability to maintain forward momentum in the relationship.

MARINE